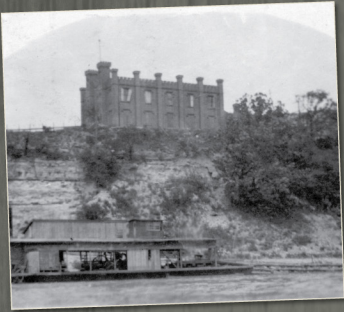


The Kentucky State Arsenal: A Strategic Location



The State Arsenal's commanding presence above the Kentucky River instilled a sense of security in the capital city. For many travelling on the river, the fortress on a hill was the first Frankfort building to come in to view.

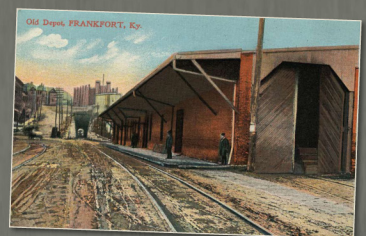
The Kentucky State Arsenal, ca. 1900
Kentucky Historical Society Collections



The city of Frankfort occupies a key location at the bend of the Kentucky River. Within this landscape, the arsenal, sited at a high point along the river, affords views of the land and water that surround it.

Bird's eye view of the city of Frankfort, The Capital of Kentucky, Albert Ruger, 1871
Kentucky Historical Society Collections

An explosion and fire in 1836 destroyed a previous arsenal. For public safety reasons, the state legislature mandated that munitions and gunpowder storage be located away from the state capitol, local residences, and commercial district. A bluff above the Kentucky River – now known as Arsenal Hill – provided the ideal site for a new state arsenal. The location, at the crossroads of river, rail, and roadway transportation routes, was critical for distribution of goods and supplies into and out of Kentucky. A railroad tunnel blasted out of the bedrock beneath the hill, in 1848, cleared the way for interstate train travel for troops, supplies, and munitions.



Located above Frankfort's main railroad line, the arsenal guarded access to the city.

Old Depot, Frankfort, Kentucky, postcard, ca. 1907-18
Private Collection



KentuckyMilitaryHistoryMuseum

AT THE OLD STATE ARSENAL

A partnership between the Kentucky Department of
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